

# Soldiers

Online

# Flaring



Among the many soldiers who will be taking part in the inaugural ceremonies are gunners from the 3rd U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard), who will fire a 21-gun salute.

Also on hand for the festivities will be the Army Fife and Drum Corps, a perennial favorite with inauguration participants and observers alike.





# the Chief

Story by Heike Hasenauer

*W*HILE many Americans are planning holiday parties and family reunions for Christmas and Hanukkah, many service members in Washington, D.C., are working overtime to ensure one of the most notable events of the new year — the inauguration of the nation's new president — takes place without a hitch.

## *A Joint Operation*

Some 500 members of the armed forces — soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and Coast Guard personnel, all part of the 54th Armed Forces Inaugural Committee — began filtering into the committee's headquarters in the Federal Aviation Administration building on Independence Avenue in Washington shortly after the presidential election.

Many of them will arrive just before the 10-day period of inaugural events begins Jan. 16, said COL Stephanie Hoehne, AFIC's director of public affairs.

But another 230 "core" members of the AFIC arrived months earlier, some as early as January, to establish the committee's internal support structure. They set up the directorates that are in



Enlisted members from each of the armed services will form the honor cordon for the president and president-elect as they make their way up the steps of the Capitol.



**Several military bands — seated just below the dais where the swearing-in takes place — provide the music that is an integral part of the ceremony.**

charge of personnel, operations, plans and security, logistics, communications, public affairs, finance, medical, legal and safety issues, Hoehne said.

The group procured everything from furniture, computers and photographic equipment for the AFIC, to trucks, sedans and minivans to support the mission's growing logistical needs. AFIC vehicle operations officer MAJ Tom Darby and his crew put together a 138-vehicle motor pool from scratch, he said. "We got double-wide trailers to use as administrative office space and a warehouse in an old Navy boiler plant where we can park the vehicles."

CPT Harriet Stephens, a Signal Corps officer formerly assigned to the Joint Battle Center in Suffolk, Va., works in the communications-electronics section, which includes visual information.

With 40 joint-service photographers and audiovisual specialists assigned to her from all of the services, Stephens is responsible for filming the inaugural events from start to finish, including the parade dress rehearsal, about 15 balls, and the actual parade and swearing-in ceremony Jan. 20.

"Our main task is to capture Defense Department support for archival purposes," Stephens said.

The responsibility means becoming familiar with every inch of the parade route, down Pennsylvania Avenue from the Capitol to the White House.

Knowing every phase of the

mission is also critical for CPT Thomas Carnell, the assistant chief of current operations. "I'll be the 'battle captain,' working the joint operations center, monitoring and providing communication assets," Carnell said.

He and Marine Corps Maj. Gary Zegley will head a team that's prepared to deal with "extraordinary events, like what to do if we have three feet of snow," Carnell said. In addition to its assigned operations task, Carnell's team will handle last-minute support requests from parade participants.

"We're the 'brigade headquarters,' providing oversight and communication to ensure everyone gets the help they need," he said. "And we act as a 'fire shield,' keeping distracters away from inaugural-event participants."

### *From Plan to Action*

Among the military's missions will be manning the AFIC's joint operations center, where representatives from each of the directorates will monitor and coordinate for contingencies that might occur, said Hoehne.

Communication from the operations center to points along the parade route is critical because the center will control the lineup of some 8,000 to 10,000 participants, no mean feat, considering horse units will be staged in Maryland and bands and marching units will be staged at the Pentagon.

LTC Charles Allen III is chief of

the Capitol Hill Division and Ceremonies Directorate, which provides all military support for the inaugural events, including the gala balls, the parade and the street cordon of some 1,250 service members who line up on either side of Pennsylvania Avenue. They render honors to the president as his motorcade moves from the Capitol to the White House, and they passively restrain observers along the route.

Following the swearing-in ceremony, a gun platoon will render a 21-gun salute.

The services will also provide drivers to chauffeur VIPs; medics to staff medical-aid stations along the parade route; military escorts for the immediate family members of the president and vice president; and medical personnel to assist the Office of the Attending Physician to Congress at the Capitol and on the platform during the swearing-in ceremony.

Military police will escort participants and will be positioned along the 1.5-mile parade route to help control traffic, said Allen.

A nonpartisan support staff that coordinates Department of Defense support for the inaugural events with



**Soldiers assigned to the Armed Forces Inaugural Committee perform a number of vital support functions, including communications, logistics and security.**



civilian planning committees, the AFIC works closely with the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies and the Presidential Inaugural Committee to satisfy requests for military support.

The JCCIC includes senators and other government representatives who plan the swearing-in ceremony and other events held at the Capitol and congressionally controlled facilities. Volunteers chosen by the president-elect form the PIC.

Army officers head the AFIC. Among the countless people, including members of some 15 other agencies tasked to ensure everything goes smoothly, is AFIC chairman MG James T. Jackson.

Deputy AFIC chairman BG Elbert N. Perkins, formerly an assistant division commander at Fort Stewart, Ga., said: "This isn't much different from drawing up a plan for a military campaign. It's a big operation requiring a lot of logistics planning.

"The number of military personnel and the types of units that will participate in the inaugural events are largely determined from historical records and after-action reports of past inaugurals," Perkins said. "But it's the PIC that ultimately selects participants."

### *A Military Tradition Continues*

For more than 200 years the armed forces have played an important role in the inauguration, and this year's inaugural parade will include some 5,000 military participants.

Traditional Army participants include units such as the U.S. Army Band (Pershing's Own); units from the commander-in-chief's guard of the 3rd U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard); and soldiers from the District of Columbia National Guard.

Perkins said bands and marching units from all five services are expected to participate, as are other units from all five services, representative marching units from the National Guard and Reserve, and units and bands from each of the service academies.

*Nearly 700 service members will be part of the AFIC when it is fully staffed shortly before the inaugural events begin in the nation's capital.*



"The energy level is high right now," Perkins said. "We're now working well into the evenings and on week-ends. Closer to Christmas, the AFIC will be a beehive of activity. We'll work late on Christmas Eve and pick up the day after Christmas."

Perkins said he encouraged people to take as much leave as they could this summer to spend quality time with their families, because everyone would be needed every day from after the November election until after the inauguration.

### *Inauguration Day*

The AFIC's nerve center, the Joint Operations Center, will operate

24 hours a day during inaugural events. The intelligence branch will provide weather updates. Logistics will complete plans for temporary housing and feeding of parade participants. And the AFIC public affairs office will continue to maintain the AFIC website [www.afic.army.mil/](http://www.afic.army.mil/) and publicize DOD's role in the historic event.

"We have to have warming tents and provide meals for parade participants and be able to rotate them in and out. So the tents have to be close, and the service fast," said Hoehne. "We have to ensure buses will be available to transport units participating in the parade, and that at 4 a.m. on Inauguration Day — when everyone gathers at rallying points — they all have the uniforms and equipment they're supposed to have. We'll also be taking care of the press; there will be 20 media vans of people with everyone wanting to talk to specific people."

Coordinating parking for all the buses carrying participants is just one of AFIC's challenges, said Hoehne.

The swearing-in ceremony will start at about 1 p.m., and will involve

**Service members will line Pennsylvania Avenue as the presidential motorcade passes, and some 5,000 military members will take part in the inaugural parade.**

another set of people, Hoehne said. Then, the new president will go to lunch with Congress.

"We estimate the last parade participants will be back on their buses at 5 p.m. Then, the gala balls start at 15 to 20 different locations at roughly 6 p.m., to allow the president to stop by each one for a short period of time," Hoehne added.

Many things could go wrong. But, Perkins said, "the services have done a tremendous job of assigning quality, motivated and dedicated people to the committee." He has no doubt everything will go well.

"It's a great honor for us to be part of this historic event," Perkins added. "It's a great venue to showcase the talents of America's sons and daughters and give the nation a reason to be proud of its military."

"Roughly 700 of us — out of all the U.S. military forces — get to be this up-close and personal to the inauguration," Perkins continued. It's something AFIC members will no doubt consider one of their most memorable service experiences. □

